



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**

Distr.: General
29 September 2008

English only

Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Mercury

Second meeting

Nairobi, Kenya

6–10 October 2008

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

Report on activities under the UNEP mercury programme

**Development of an action plan to address primary mercury mining in
Kyrgyzstan**

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to provide, in the annex to the present note, an information document submitted by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research on the development of an action plan to address primary mercury mining in Kyrgyzstan for the information of the Working Group at its second meeting. The document has been reproduced without formal editing.

* UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/OEWG.2/1.

Annex



unitar
United Nations Institute for Training and Research



Development of an Action Plan to Address Primary Mercury Mining in Kyrgyzstan

Summary Project Note

October 2008

Introduction

The project on *Development of an Action Plan to Address Primary Mercury Mining in Kyrgyzstan* is a partnership activity between Kyrgyzstan, UNITAR, UNEP, UNEP/GRID-Arendal with financial support from Government of Switzerland and US EPA. The project is carried out in the context of the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership Programme established in 2003. The overall goal of the programme is to reduce the risks to human health and the environment from anthropogenic mercury releases worldwide.

A first project activity, a joint Swiss-UNEP-UNITAR exploratory mission to Kyrgyzstan has taken place during April 2008. The mission's overall objectives were to raise awareness about the project with national and regional authorities as well with other potentially interested and/or active parties; to assess the situation among potential governmental partners through a series of meetings in Bishkek and Osh; and to visit the Khaidarkan mining, smelting, refining and waste disposal operations.

A Memorandum of Agreement between the Kyrgyz authorities and UNITAR spelling out responsibilities and deliverables under the project is currently under development and is expected to be signed in the near future. A list of key project activities with indication of responsible parties and preliminary timeframe can be found in Annex 1.

Objectives

The overall objective of the project is to reduce risks associated with primary mercury mining in the Khaidarkan area, Batken Oblast, Kyrgyz Republic, by assessing the mercury mine and smelter, including environmental, technical and socio-economic aspects and developing an action plan to address identified gaps and challenges including options to replace the present mercury mining operations in the area by environmentally less harmful initiatives.

The project is expected to raise awareness of the local as well as donor community about currently ongoing primary mercury mining in the country and, through its catalytic nature and approach, stimulate investments for possible follow-up. Activities planned under the present project are of an analytical nature and constitute only an initial stage in the process of addressing mercury risk reduction in Kyrgyzstan. A flow chart describing the different activities and actors is attached as Annex 2.

Activities

Assessments

A first project component will be the development of a technical assessment of the various aspects of the Khaidarkan mercury mining operations. The assessment will be carried out by UNEP/GRID-Arendal together with Kyrgyz national institutions and experts with advice from UNEP Chemicals. It will provide an important input into the socio-economic assessment study of the mining operations to be undertaken by the Kyrgyz government and national/regional experts in close cooperation with UNITAR and other partners.

The technical assessment will include a review of the plant's history and future plans; a technical review of the entire mining, smelting, refining and waste disposal complex, a rapid assessment of its current environmental conditions and of the implications of known and potential health impacts on workers and the population of the surrounding settlements and an initial review of possible sustainable industrial alternatives in replacement of primary mercury production. Limited additional environmental sampling and analysis in a certified laboratory is envisaged. Some preliminary results of the technical assessment can be found in the document entitled "The draft Desk Assessment on primary mercury mining in Kyrgyzstan" in English and Russian which is available on the website: http://www.chem.unep.ch/MERCURY/Sector-Specific-Information/supply_and_storage.htm

The socio-economic assessment will concentrate on the collection of population, health, educational, economic and welfare statistics as they relate to the population of the area under past and current socio-economic and environmental conditions. This could include bilateral interviews with the various national and regional stakeholders and additional surveys to collect data about the communities concerned.

Generation of an action plan with options

The two assessments will inform the development of an action plan by national experts (in close consultation with UNITAR and UNEP). The action plan will address environmental and socio-economic concerns associated with primary mercury mining in the country against the background of currently ongoing international action to deal with the significant global adverse impacts of mercury. It is envisaged that the action plan will include initial options for economically viable and sustainable possible alternatives for industrial activity in the region.

The results and recommendations will be discussed by a wide variety of national and regional stakeholders and presented for consultations and approval at a National Forum.

Subsequently an International Forum will be organized to present the results of the National Forum to interested donors and international organizations.

Project Management

With regard to project management, UNITAR will take the lead in developing the socio-economic methodology and related guidance materials, and will be the overall international coordinator of the project and liaison with the Kyrgyz Government. UNEP Chemicals and UNEP/GRID-Arendal will lead the technical assessment study and provide advice and technical support to the project.

On the national level the Kyrgyz authorities will appoint a National Lead Agency/National Coordinator and establish a National Advisory Committee with the involvement of key government agencies as well as national and regional stakeholders outside the government.

At the international level, a group of international advisers (USEPA, Swiss Government, international organizations such as UNDP, ILO and other interested stakeholders) is to be created to provide comments on methodology and project outputs.

The duration of the project is approximately 1 year.

Annex 1: Indicative Timeline for the Project

Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
Scoping Mission	UNEP/UNITAR/ Switzerland	April 2008
UNITAR Mission (One day; IGO Meetings and Environment)	UNITAR	May 2008
UNITAR-GRID MoA	UNITAR/UNEP-GRID-Arendal	Signed June 2008
UNITAR-Kyrgyzstan MoA	UNITAR	Signed August 2008
Group of International Advisors	UNEP/UNITAR	Ongoing teleconferences
Field Missions (Others to be determined)	UNEP-GRID-Arendal (TA)	July 2008
	UNITAR (SEA)	October 2008
	UNEP-GRID-Arendal (TA)	October 2008
Desk Assessment	UNEP-GRID-Arendal	Draft made available in July 2008
Technical Analysis Report	UNEP-GRID-Arendal	Draft made available in September 2008 January 2009 (final)
Socio-Economic Methodology	UNITAR	Draft made in available September 2008
Socio-Economic Assessment	Kyrgyzstan	October 2008
Action Plan Training	UNITAR/ Kyrgyzstan	October 2008
Action Plan Draft	Kyrgyzstan	December 2008
Public Awareness Workshop and National Consultations	UNITAR/ Kyrgyzstan	December 2008
Donor Consultations meeting	UNITAR/UNEP/Kyrgyzstan	February 2009
National Forum	Kyrgyzstan/UNITAR	April 2009
International Forum	UNITAR/UNEP	June 2009
UNEP Supply Document (related to international deliberations on mercury)	UNEP	18 August 2008

Annex 2

Development of an Action Plan to Address Mercury Mining in Kyrgyzstan

